

When Christian's are in Willful Sin, Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 – October 19th, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part one of a series I've titled, "When Christian's are in Willful Sin."
- Please know that because of the mature subject matter in this chapter, I will seek to deal with it as delicately as I can without defanging it.
- By that I mean this chapter has sharp teeth, if you will, and as such, there is a sanctified strength that we would do well to hear and heed.

- Such was the case for the carnal Christians in Corinth, who had in their midst a professing Christian who was living in willful sexual sin.
- The problem was they were doing absolutely nothing about it and instead, they were actually boasting about how tolerant they were of it.
- Enter the Apostle Paul and with him, the first response when a professing Christian is living in willful sin, particularly when it's sexual sin.

1. Confront them (Verses 1-2)

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?

- v1 Paul says there's sexual immorality among them; it's of a kind that even pagans don't tolerate. A man is sleeping with his father's wife.
- v2 He says they are proud when instead they should have gone into mourning and put out of their church the man who has been doing this.
- There are a couple of things we should know about this situation in order to better understand why Paul is so harsh in his confronting them.

- First, the narrative seems to indicate that this was his stepmother and not his biological mother, who presumably may have died earlier on.
- Secondly, it would seem his stepmother, who is referred to as his father's wife, was not a Christian, or she too would have been confronted.
- Third, Paul is confronting the Corinthian's for not confronting this man, and because they were actually taking pride in tolerating this man.

- Sadly, the cultural dynamics in all of its carnality there in the port city of Corinth had unduly influenced the Christian church there in Corinth.
- This because, Corinth was a city that was known for it's flagrant sexual immorality, such that the pagans sort of celebrated their sexuality.
- While this most certainly doesn't excuse the Corinthian Christian's, it may in some way explain why the Corinthian Christian's tolerated this.

To give you an idea of how sexual the culture was, the Greeks had a saying that went like this, "Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, but wives to bear us legitimate children."

- This is probably as good of a time as any to point out the word for sexual immorality in the original Greek language of the New Testament.
- The reason being is that it's the Greek word "porneia," which is where we get our English word "pornography," translated sexual immorality.
- This would include any form of sexual sin outside of marriage such as premarital sex, extramarital sex, and among others homosexuality.

I find it interesting that just this last week, the openly Lesbian mayor of Houston Texas issued subpoenas demanding a group of pastors turn over their sermons. Last Tuesday, October 14th, Fox News published an article with that title, saying, "The city of Houston has issued subpoenas demanding a group of pastors turn over any sermons dealing with homosexuality, gender identity or Annise Parker, the city's first openly lesbian mayor. And those ministers who fail to comply could be held in contempt of court. ...Among those slapped with a subpoena is Steve Riggle, the senior pastor of Grace Community Church. ...The mega-church pastor was also ordered to hand over "all communications with members of your congregation" regarding the non-discrimination law. "This is an attempt to chill pastors from speaking to the cultural issues of the day," Riggle told me. "The mayor would like to silence our voice. She's a bully." ...Tony Perkins, the head of the Family Research Council, said ... "This is a shot across the bow of the church," ...This is the moment I wrote about in my book, "God Less America." I predicted that the government would one day try to silence American pastors. I warned that under the guise of "tolerance and diversity" elected officials would attempt to deconstruct religious liberty. Sadly, that day arrived sooner than even I expected.

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/10/14/city-houston-demands-pastors-turn-over-sermons/>

- You probably already know where I'm going with this, so I'll hasten to say that the church today is like the Corinthian church in Paul's day.
- More specifically, the culture has succeeded in some measure to silence the church from confronting sexual sin especially in the church.
- In other words, the Corinthians had acquiesced under the banner of tolerance and diversity because of pressure from the world to do so.

One commentator has what I think is tremendous insight into why the world bullies the church to be open minded and tolerant. "The world ...loves to see Christians involved in immorality because it eases their conscience and justifies their own loose lifestyle. Knowing this, one of Satan's favorite tactics is to get Christians involved in immorality. He runs the same play over and over again. It's very easy for Satan to bring Christians into temptation in the area of morals by simply nudging agape—the caring, sharing, tenderness, concern, and compassion in which believers are called to walk—into the area of eros, or sensual love.

- Be that as it may, it's important to understand this unnamed man in our text was unrepentant, in that he had not fallen prey to temptation.
- The point being is that this does not apply to the Christian who is struggling with, or occasionally falls, then repents and forsakes their sin.
- What's interesting is, as we'll see in this series, is that this mans repenting comes by way of the confronting on the part of the Corinthians.

- Here's the bottom line in closing, confronting of willful sexual sin is for the benefit of not only the man in the church, but the church as well.
- Actually, we'll see this in part two, Lord willing, where Paul tells them to take drastic measures in order to save him and protect the church.
- Left unchecked, this tolerated sexual sin in the church had the propensity to utterly destroy the church, which is why Paul is so harsh with it.

Of this one commentator wrote, "Clearly, this was Paul's solution to the problem—to take this notoriously unrepentant man away from the protection of the fellowship of God's people.

- I'll leave you with two questions, both of which I also ask of myself, "am I willing to jeopardize a relationship in order to confront ones sin?"
- Second, if I'm the one being confronted in my sin, do I see it as being for my own good as well as for the protection of a body of believers?
- Would to God that we would be numbered amongst those of whom it can be said, instead of tolerating open sin, they confronted open sin.